

KDHE Taps Hansen as State Epidemiologist

Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) is pleased to announce that Dr. Gail Hansen has been selected the new State Epidemiologist, after serving as the interim state epidemiologist since February 2004.

Hansen has been an infectious disease epidemiologist within the Division of Health at the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) since October 1996. She started as an assistant state epidemiologist and state public health veterinarian, and has served as the deputy state epidemiologist since 2001.



Dr. Gail Hansen

In 2002, Hansen earned the Samuel Crumbine medal by the Kansas Public Health Association (KPHA) for contributions to public health in Kansas. Hansen has held an adjunct faculty position at the Kansas State University College of Veterinary Medicine and works with the programs of public health at both Kansas State University and University of Kansas.

Before coming to Kansas, she served as an epidemiologist at the Seattle-King County Health Department in Washington, working primarily on applied epidemiology research in HIV and AIDS. Hansen received her master's degree in public health from the University of Washington in 1993 and her veterinary degree in 1982 from the University of Minnesota. She worked for 14 years as a veterinary clinician in private practices in Seattle, New York City, and Greensboro, NC.

"As the state epidemiologist, I plan to keep my hand in communicable diseases, but will broaden the scope of the position to be more knowledgeable and more involved with all aspects of public health epidemiology. I see the state epidemiologist as a person who can span the broad scope of public health epidemiology at KDHE," Hansen explained.

"I do not expect to be an expert in all the epidemiologic details in all the programs, but to bring together common epidemiology elements and themes. The ultimate goals are to foster collaborations within the entire agency among different programs, have epidemiologists within the agency learn from each other, determine strengths and weaknesses within the discipline of public health epidemiology at KDHE, continue to provide epidemiologic technical assistance to local health departments, and provide the state coherent interpreted results of surveillance and other data."

Hansen noted that public and local health department requests have pointed out the desire for many Kansans to expand environmental health programs. One of the first steps KDHE has already taken is to find a qualified environmental epidemiologist to help support programs within KDHE.

"It is vital to our state's future that we serve Kansans on both the public health and environment fronts," she noted.